

SAMARITANS IN SPAIN (SiS) – NEWSLETTER JULY 2020



The Community Hub
Samaritans In Spain

Samaritans In Spain : If you need us, please call us – it's FREE!
Samaritans in Spain is a fully registered charity and offers an English-speaking emotional support service for anyone in distress here in Spain, of any age or nationality, wherever you may be located within mainland Spain or the Islands. You do not have to be suicidal to call – they handle calls about all kinds of situations from loneliness and isolation, to worries about Brexit, Covid 19, fears about health, work and financial issues, drug or alcohol abuse, domestic violence, self-harm, anxiety and depression.
The charity operates along the same lines as Samaritans UK, albeit on a much smaller scale. It is funded purely through the kind donations of members of the public.
All of the specially trained Samaritans Listeners are volunteers and they cover the helplines from 10am to 10pm every single day of the year, including weekends and holidays.
Whatever you are going through they will go through it with you – in total confidence.

The helpline number 900 525 100 is FREE
for all callers. Do not suffer alone.
If you need to speak to someone
please call now!
For further information about the service,
how to volunteer and how you can donate
please visit
www.samaritansinspain.com

Samaritans in Spain.

Serving the Community
900 525 100

The background of the graphic features a silhouette of two people on a hill at sunset, with one person reaching out to the other.

Hello Everybody,

I hope that everyone is managing to stay cool in the heat...

The article above is just one of several that will be appearing in the local press over the summer. On 19th June I also made a Live Facebook appeal for support and donations. Please like and share the video which is still available on the SiS Facebook page. Hopefully this will also help raise our profile for donations. Our call rate is steadily climbing at the moment.

Many of you may now be planning to travel at long last to see loved ones or receive visitors. Please stay safe! And thank you as always to those volunteers who are here working all through the summer. It is particularly difficult this year due to the Covid situation. Please be kind to our dedicated Centre Managers on duty as they are working relentlessly around the clock to troubleshoot while Listeners all currently work remotely. Our Shop Supervisors are doing a grand job too coping with reduced manpower and hours.

Please send your thoughts out also to a number of our volunteers who are currently having ongoing hospital treatment, such as our Punta Prima Listener Brenda Cox , and also to our Shop Supervisor Moira Sneddon and La Marina Listener Joan Bennett who both have legs in plaster due to accidents! We wish a speedy recovery to all of you.

Trustee Belinda Bradley is having to take a step back from her Samaritans role for the summer due to other issues she is dealing with relating to her paid full-time work. Not all our volunteers are retired, and we have other commitments which have been exacerbated by the lockdown! So please be patient if the Board cannot respond as quickly as we would all ideally like. I need to go to UK for 3 weeks for personal business reasons from 20 July but will respond to enquiries.

I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to Martin Bentley, who has decided to stand down as a Trustee. Martin was instrumental in helping us establish the Satellite teams of Listeners in 2018-19. Best wishes for the future.

The Board was able to meet in person on 15th July for the first time since February with our Treasurer, with finances high on the agenda. The Charity Shop reopened only on 18 June and operating Mon – Sat 10am to 2pm has brought in around 15-170euros daily which enables us to just break even on fixed costs. Our Charity Unit at Lumsdens Auction House in Formentera is now open on Thurs - Fridays only and for now covers costs. We will review this again around Christmas. With regard to the question of us being required to pay IVA, two other charities Reach Out and Help at Home have now launched a fairly aggressive campaign in an attempt to relieve us all of this tax obligation. We are in touch with them about how we might provide support. You may have seen their articles in the local papers. If not, here is the link to copy into your web browser to read online.

https://www.theolivepress.es/spain-news/2020/06/29/two-expat-run-charities-on-the-costa-blanca-launch-campaign-to-end-spains-iva-taxation-of-charity-shops/?fbclid=IwAR0Z35fyteZhnkpkUk3Mn-8IHATiGVXoL5Wz4NWIjThTY9SD5HR5cMEvt7o#utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss

The Board have had to take some tough decisions to continue savings and economies. That means that the moratorium on any procurement, travel, and personal expenses continues will but be reviewed again at the next Board on 19th August. Meanwhile, our 2nd bank account at La Caixa will be closed and transactions moved to our account at Sabadell to save on monthly and quarterly charges. With a move towards paperless working the lease on the big photocopier at the Drop In which costs us 720€ pa will also be cancelled.



The Listener Service

Thank you to the Centre Managers and Listeners who have provided their feedback & ideas on the future of the Service. It is clear that, while some of you enjoy working from home and are happy to continue, there are others based at Punta Prima who would prefer to attend calls at the Drop In. The Board agreed today that we should aim to open 1 or 2 shifts 10am to 2pm (say Tues and Sat) from 1st September with 2 Listeners on duty. This will enable 1 or 2 newbie Listeners to complete their mentoring. If you are interested in manning these shifts please contact the Centre Managers. Meanwhile the rota continues on mobile only until 31st August.

We need the rest of July and August to rearrange the overflowing stockroom to take other items currently occupying the Drop In, which enabled the Shop to comply with current rules on how it operates. Even so, only the small phone room, with a table and chairs at the entrance and access to the kitchenette and WC will be possible with the remainder of space still blocked for donations and shop rails. Face to Face may be difficult with the obligatory use of masks but we can review that nearer the time depending on the situation then. We also have to be prepared to reverse

our decision in the event of any 2nd lockdown (local or national).

Getting Together:

When I return from UK, I shall arrange to meet with all the Centre Managers and review our working practices for the months ahead. I would also like to suggest that instead of rota meetings at Punta Prima we have small group meetings of Listeners in different areas so we can at least socialise and catch up – for example one in say, Los Alcazares to the south or San Luis- La Siesta to the north – to accommodate people spread out over different locations and avoid long journeys. If anyone has ideas for venues or dates please let me know!

In the autumn we need to retrain and / or identify new trainers. I am now in touch with the new co-ordinator for communications with UK Samaritans and Befrienders Worldwide. We can expect a new training package (and operating licence renewal) to be rolled out to us by end September / early October with an online presentation to us by UK Samaritans. The new training is going to be in a far more digital format than we have all been used to and may need some modification to meet local needs. We should then be in a position to “cascade” this to Satellites via Skype or Zoom meetings. If you are interested in joining us on the training team please do let me or Centre Managers know!

Given the uncertainty over the way the Coronavirus crisis will evolve we can only estimate for the moment that we might be able to actually recruit at Punta Prima by Christmas for new listeners and offer them training in the New Year.

We are by no means alone in struggling in these difficult times. David Wilkins the UK Sams / BW co-ordinator tells me that many teams are finding it hard to cope with the restrictions on how we all work and volunteer burnout. The welfare of all of our volunteers is paramount and we will never ask anyone to continue under stress or ask those shielding to attend to anything against their wishes. If necessary, with any manpower shortages, we will simply modify our services and hours of operation to suit. Nobody can pour from an empty cup! If you have any concerns at all about wellbeing please contact me or Ade Webster.

Take care of yourselves,

Lynda Brettle

President

lynda.spainsams@gmail.com

www.samaritansinspain.com